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(54) Hydrocarbon steam reforming using series steam superheaters.

(57) Referring to Figure 1 the hydrocarbon gas feedstream (6) is partially reformed at elevated temperatures in indirect heat exchange with hot combustion gases in a direct fired primary reforming furnace (10) provided with a convection section (4) for recovery of combustion gas treat; and (b) the partially reformed feedstream (58) is then further reformed in the presence of an oxygen-containing gas and steam in a secondary reformer (60) to form a secondary reformer gaseous effluent (62); the improvement which comprises heating a high pressure saturated steam (82) in a first steam superheating zone (80) by indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said secondary reformer effluent gas (76) to form a first superheated steam stream (84); and (ii) further heating said first superheated steam in a second steam superheating zone (25) by indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said primary reformer hot combustion gases to form a second superheated steam stream (36).

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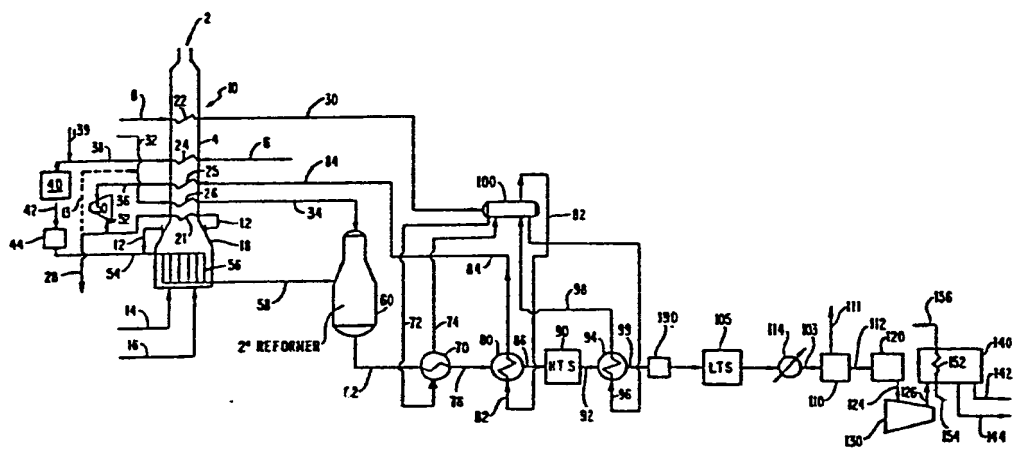


FIG. 1

1 **HYDROCARBON STEAM REFORMING USING SERIES STEAM
 SUPERHEATERS**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

 The present invention is directed to an improved
process for the steam reforming of hydrocarbon gas feeds,
5 and specifically to a steam reforming process which uti-
 lizes series steam superheaters for improved heat inte-
 gration.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

 Generally, the manufacture of ammonia consists of
10 preparing an ammonia synthesis gas from a nitrogen
 source, usually air, and from a hydrogen source, which is
 conventionally either coal, petroleum fractions, or natu-
 ral gases. For example, in the preparation of ammonia
 synthesis gas from a light hydrocarbon feedstock, which
15 may range from natural gas to naphtha, the hydrocarbon
 feedstock gas is first purified by removing gaseous con-
 taminants, such as sulfur (which would poison the down-
 stream catalysts) from the feedstock by the catalytic
 hydrogenation of the sulfur compounds to hydrogen sulfide
20 and adsorption of the hydrogen sulfide over a zinc oxide
 adsorption medium. Subsequent steam reforming of the
 contaminant-free gas provides the major portion of the
 hydrogen required for ammonia synthesis from the hydro-
 carbons in the gas. Reforming is accomplished by a two-
25 stage process in which a mixture of steam and the puri-
 fied feed gas are first reformed over catalyst in a pri-
 mary reformer, followed by treatment of the partially
 reformed gas in a secondary reformer to which air is
 introduced, in order to provide the required amount of N₂
30 for ammonia synthesis. A reformed gas is produced in the
 secondary reformer having a greater amount of hydrogen

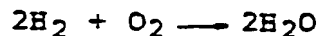
1 and a lesser amount of hydrocarbons. The reaction processes occurring in the reforming of the feedstock gas begin with the breakdown of hydrocarbons to methane, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide:



5 and end with the reforming of these products by the desired endothermic methane reforming reaction:



and by accompanying exothermic reactions:



The carbon monoxide in the reformed gas is converted to carbon dioxide and additional hydrogen in one or more shift conversion vessels, and the carbon dioxide is removed by scrubbing. Further treatment of the raw synthesis gas by methanation may be used to remove additional carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide from the hydrogen-rich gas, resulting subsequently in an ammonia synthesis gas containing approximately three parts of hydrogen and one part of nitrogen, that is, the 3:1 stoichiometric ratio of hydrogen to nitrogen in ammonia, plus small amounts of inerts such as methane, argon and helium. The ammonia synthesis gas is then converted to ammonia by passing the gas over a catalytic surface based upon metallic iron (conventionally magnetite) which has been promoted with other metallic oxides, and allowing the ammonia to be synthesized according to the following exothermic reaction:



Conventional reforming ammonia plant designs recover all of the waste heat available from cooling the secondary reformer effluent (typically at temperatures of from 1600 to 1900°F) down to a temperature suitable for high temperature shift converter operation (which typically employs an inlet temperature of from 316 to 399°C)

1 by generation of high pressure saturated steam. Since
saturated steam temperatures at pressures within the
realm of proven steam turbine technology are no more than
about 343°C, this results in a substantial temperature
5 downgrading of the heat available in the secondary
reformer effluent, which is undesirable from the
standpoint of the second law of thermodynamics. Even
more importantly, it represents a severe restriction on
steam balance flexibility since the waste heat goes only
10 into saturated steam generation.

In U.S. Patent 3,441,393 to Pullman, a series of
two saturated steam generators are employed to recover
heat from the secondary reformer effluent.

15 Various patents to ICI have issued in which the
secondary reformer effluent is first employed to generate
saturated steam in a first steam generator and is then
used to generate superheated steam from steam passed
thereto from a steam superheater which in turn has re-
covered heat from the ammonia synthesis reactor effluent.
20 Finally, additional quantities of saturated steam are
generated in a second steam generator from the secondary
reformer effluent, before this effluent is passed to the
shift conversion.

25 U.S. Patents 4,213,954 and 4,264,567 illustrate
these systems. U.S. Patent 4,367,206 to ICI produces
methanol and ammonia in a process in which heat is re-
covered from the effluent of one ammonia synthesis reac-
tor catalyst stage by superheating steam which is then
further superheated by indirect heat exchange with second-
30 ary reformer effluent. However, such a process is not
easily employed in combination with newer ammonia synthe-
sis reactor designs which employ large volumes of conven-
tional catalyst to improve energy efficiency and which opti-
mally operate at lower temperatures, nor with newer am-
35 monia synthesis catalysts which also optimally operate at
lower temperatures. Also, the process requires the use

1 of expensive, high pressure shells in said superheat
exchanger equipment since, if energy efficient high pres-
sure steam generation is employed, both fluids exchanging
heat would have pressures exceeding 1000 psig (1000-2200
5 psig on the steam side and 6900-41,370 kPa on the reactor
effluent side).

U.S. Patent 3,442,613 to Braun also illustrates a
system in which saturated steam is generated by heat
recovery from the secondary reformer effluent. Another
10 patent in this vein is U.S. Patent 3,947,551 to Benfield.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In a process for steam reforming of a hydrocarbon
gas feedstream wherein: (a) the hydrocarbon gas feed-
stream is partially reformed at elevated temperatures in
15 indirect heat exchange with hot combustion gases in a
direct fired primary reforming furnace provided with a
convection section for recovery of excess heat from said
combustion gases; and (b) the partially reformed feed-
stream is then further reformed in the presence of an
20 oxygen-containing gas and steam in a secondary reformer
to form a secondary reformer gaseous effluent; the im-
provement which comprises recovering waste heat from said
secondary reformer effluent gas and from said primary
reforming combustion products by (i) heating high pres-
25 sure saturated steam in a first steam superheating zone
by indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said
secondary reformer effluent gas to form a first super-
heated steam stream; and (ii) further heating said first
superheated steam in a second steam superheating zone by
30 indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said
primary reformer hot combustion gases to form a second
superheated steam stream.

With the increasing emphasis on development of low
energy ammonia plant designs, more and more process waste
35 heat is recovered by way of steam production, while other
energy saving features manifest themselves in reductions

1 of steam consumption. These combined effects tend to
make a new highly efficient design a net exporter of
steam. However, if uses for export steam are limited,
either the energy cannot be saved in the first place or
5 the excess steam must be diverted to inefficient electric
power turbogeneration. Turbogeneration requires a very
high investment, and is particularly unattractive if low
cost coal, nuclear or hydroelectric based electricity is
available. The current invention minimizes steam produc-
10 tion, while maintaining high energy efficiency.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic illustration of one
embodiment of the process of this invention.

15 Figure 2 is a diagrammatic illustration of the high
pressure steam and heat recovery system of an integrated
hydrocarbon steam reforming process, as described in
Example 1.

20 Figure 3 is a diagrammatic illustration of a por-
tion of the process of Figure 1 showing a method for
controlled generation of superheated steam from secondary
reformer effluent waste heat.

25 Figure 4 is a diagrammatic illustration of a por-
tion of the process of Figure 1 in which yet another
method is used for controlled generation of superheated
steam from secondary reformer effluent waste heat.

Figure 5 is a diagrammatic illustration of a por-
tion of the process of Figure 1 in which still another
method is used for controlled generation of superheated
steam from secondary reformer effluent waste heat.

30 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to Figure 1, there is seen a primary
reforming furnace stage generally indicated by the nu-
meral 10, having convection section 4, and primary re-
forming radiant section 18 heated by burners (not shown,
35 and mounted, for example, in the floor of the radiant

1 section) which are supplied with fuel gas 14 and an ox-
dant gas (e.g., combustion air) 16 as illustrated. Hot
flue gas exiting the radiant section flows through con-
vection section 4, past process steam superheat exchanger
5 21, process air (which may contain steam and air) heat
exchanger 26, power steam superheat exchanger 25, feed
gas heat exchanger 24, and boiler feed water preheater
22, and is discharged through stack 2. Therefore, pri-
mary reformer 10 is direct fired by means of the combus-
10 tion of fuel gas 14 and the oxidant gas 16 therein. It
will be understood that the direction of flow of the hot
combustion gases through primary reformer 10 is not crit-
ical, and primary reformer 10 can comprise any conven-
tional primary reformer design, such as is illustrated in
15 U.S. Patent 4,213,954, wherein the combustion gas is
passed downwardly from the upper portion of the reform-
er's radiant section and wherein the convection section
is horizontally disposed.

The two-stage reforming process requires the intro-
duction of four separate process streams to the primary
20 reformer: feed gas (for a source of hydrogen), steam, an
oxygen-containing gas and fuel gas. In addition, where
the process is intended for use in producing an ammonia
synthesis gas, a source of nitrogen gas (which is gen-
erally air) is added in the secondary reforming stage.
25

Feed gas is introduced into the process via conduit
6 and passes through feed gas heat exchanger 24, posi-
tioned in the primary reforming furnace's convection
section 4. This preheats the feed gas to approximately
30 750°F. The gas feedstocks 6 which can be treated in ac-
cordance with the process of this invention can vary
widely. Suitable feed gases include coke gas or refinery
gases, such as are discussed in U.S. Patent 3,649,558, in
addition to coal pyrolysis gas, and feedstocks such as
35 those available from intermediate BTU gas (IBG) streams
resulting from the gasification of coal or lignite using
conventional gasification processes. Also suitable as

1 feeds are natural gas, naphtha, liquefied petroleum gas
(LPG), liquefied natural gas (LNG) and the like.

5 The heated feed gas is withdrawn from exchanger 24
via conduit 38 and may be admixed with H₂-containing gas
and then contacted at elevated temperatures with a
conventional hydrodesulfurization catalyst such as a
supported Co-Mo or Ni-Mo hydrodesulfurization catalyst
to convert the S compounds in the feed gas to S forms
which can then be removed in sulfur removal zone 44.

10 Alternatively, or in addition to hydrodesulfuriza-
tion zone 40, feed gas 38 can be admixed with sufficient
steam to supply the water of reaction required for a
subsequent COS hydrolysis reaction if COS is present in
the feed. The quantity of steam which is thus introduced
15 can vary widely and will generally comprise from about 2
to 4 vol.%, based on the total feed gas in conduit 38
withdrawn from exchanger 24. The COS reaction can be
effected by any conventional means, using conventional
hydrolysis catalysts such as activated alumina. In this
20 reactor, COS contained in the feed gas is converted into
hydrogen sulfide gas at conventional hydrolysis condi-
tions, which typically range from about 149 to 177°C and
from about 2069 to 4137 kPA.

25 The gas mixture resulting from the hydrodesulfuri-
zation treatment (or from a COS hydrolysis step) may
contain hydrogen sulfide, and is introduced via conduit
42 into sulfur removal zone 44, generally at a gas tem-
perature of from about 316 to 399°C, and hydrogen sulfide
impurities are removed from the gas stream by conven-
30 tional technology, such as by use of a zinc oxide adsorp-
tion bed. The gas, now essentially free of sulfur im-
purities (e.g., containing less than about 0.2 ppm by
weight of sulfur compounds, calculated as elemental sul-
fur), is withdrawn via conduit 54 and admixed with steam,
35 which can be accomplished by injecting steam into conduit
54 via conduit 12 and which can comprise at least a por-
tion of steam turbine 50 exhaust. Normally, either the

1 turbine exhaust steam 12 is heated before mixing with the
desulfurized feedstock gas, or this exhaust steam is
first admixed with the feedstock gas and the resulting
mixture is heated, before being passed to the primary
5 reforming step. Again, the quantity of steam introduced
at this point can vary, and will generally range from
about 2.5 to 5.0 moles per mole of carbon in the desul-
furized gas feed. The function of the steam introduced at
this point in the process is to provide the water of re-
10 action necessary for the subsequent reforming reactions.
The steam/desulfurized gas mixture is then introduced
into the tubes 56 of primary reformer 10 wherein the feed
gas is at least partially reformed by contacting the feed
gas, under reforming conditions, in tubes 56 with a con-
15 ventional reforming catalyst. Any conventional primary
reforming catalyst can be employed, such as nickel,
nickel oxide, chromia, molybdenum, mixtures thereof and
the like, with nickel-on-calcium aluminate or nickel-on-
alumina being preferred. The temperature within tubes
20 56 will generally range from about 427 to 816°C and the
pressure will generally range from about 2069 to 6900
kPa, and the total gas hourly space velocity in tubes 56
will generally range from about 5000 to 15,000 v/v/hr.,
with a range of from 6000 to 10,000 v/v/hr. being pre-
25 ferred.

As a result of the reforming reactions occurring in
tubes 56 of primary reformer 10, substantially all of the
hydrocarbon components of the feed gas (other than meth-
ane) are converted to CH_4 , CO , CO_2 and H_2 ; a portion of
30 the original methane component is likewise converted to
 CO , CO_2 and H_2 ; and the temperature of the gas mixture
will be generally increased to about 677 to 802°C. The
partially reformed gas will generally have a residual
methane level of from about 5 to 20 vol.% CH_4 , on a dry
35 basis.

The hot combustion gases travel past the exterior
of tubes 56 out of radiant section 18 and into convection

1 section 4 wherein the hot gases contact heat exchangers
21, 26, 25, 24, and 22, for recovery of heat by exchange
with various streams. The precise number and sequence of
the convection section heat exchangers can be chosen using
5 conventional techniques to minimize investment and/or
maximize energy recovery. (For example, one or more heat
exchangers may be split into separate units in convection
section 4 to achieve a more favorable temperature profile.)

Boiler feed water 8 is passed through heat exchanger 22
10 and then via conduit 30 to steam drum 100, from which
steam is passed for superheating through exchangers 80
and 25, (as will be described in more detail below), to
achieve a steam temperature of approximately -482°C .
Additional boiler feed water preheated by other means,
15 can be also passed to steam drum 100, if desired.) This
steam is then passed to turbine 50 to generate work, and
the resulting steam from turbine exhaust line 52 is
partially withdrawn via conduit 28 and the remainder is
passed to heat exchanger 21 for reheating of the exhaust
20 steam to about 649°C in indirect heat exchange in
convection section 4, and thence to conduit 12. The thus
reheated steam is combined with the desulfurized feed gas
and fed to catalyst-filled reformer tubes 56 in radiant
section 18.

25 Process air obtained from any convenient source is
preheated by passing it via conduit 32 to primary re-
former convection exchanger 26 wherein it is heated (gen-
erally to a temperature of from about 482 to 704°C by
indirect heat exchange with the hot primary reformer
30 convection gas. Prior to or at an intermediate point in
the heating process, the air may be mixed with a portion
of turbine exhaust steam 13. The thus-heated process air
(with or without admixed steam) is introduced via conduit
34 into secondary reformer 60, together with the par-
35 tially reformed gas mixture which is introduced via con-
duit 58.

1 The quantity of air introduced via conduit 34 is
adjusted using conventional control means (not shown), to
provide an air:feed ratio sufficient to yield about a 3:1
hydrogen:nitrogen ratio in the ammonia synthesis gas,
5 that is, to provide a $H_2:N_2$ ratio of from about 2.6:1 to
3.2:1, and preferably from about 2.7:1 to 3.2:1.

 Secondary reformer 60 can comprise an adiabatic re-
former of conventional design and during steady-state
operation achieves further reforming by means of the heat
10 released therein from the exothermic reaction of oxygen
with partially reformed feedstock. The amount and type
of catalyst in reformer 60 is also conventional, with Ni
catalysts supported on alumina being typical. The second-
ary reformer will generally employ an outlet temperature
15 of from about 871 to 1038°C, a pressure of from about
2069 to 6900 kPa, and a total gas hourly space velocity
of from about 6000 to 10,000 v/v/hr.

 The reformer effluent gas (generally having a tem-
perature of from about 871 to 1038°C and a residual CH_4
20 level of from about 0.2 to 2.0 vol.% CH_4 , on a dry basis)
is withdrawn from secondary reformer 60 via conduit 62
and is passed to steam generator 70 in which saturated
high pressure steam is generated and withdrawn via con-
duit 74 from preheated feedwater passed to generator 70
25 via conduit 72. The thus generated high pressure steam
74 is passed to steam drum 100, which also provides the
source of the preheated feedwater 72 (generally preheated
to a temperature of from about 232 to 343°C). The
resulting partially cooled secondary reformer effluent
30 (generally at a stream temperature of from about 454 to
816°C is withdrawn via conduit 76 and then passed to
steam superheater 80 for superheating of steam which is
passed thereto via conduit 82 (generally at a temperature
of from about 232 to 343°C, and about 2760 to 15,170 kPa)
35 from steam drum 100 to produce superheated steam. The
superheated steam 84 (generally at a temperature of about
260 to 510°C and about 2760 to 15,170 kPa) is passed to

1 superheat exchanger 25 in the primary reformer convection
section 4, for generation of a higher level superheat
therein, generally forming superheated steam having a
temperature of from about 316 to 566°C. From super-
5 heater 80, the cooled reformer effluent is passed via
conduit 86 to high temperature shift (HTS) converter 90,
wherein carbon monoxide in the reformer effluent gas is
converted over conventional catalysts and using conven-
tional methods and equipment to carbon dioxide and addi-
10 tional hydrogen.

Generally, a temperature of from about 316 to 482°C
and a pressure of from about 2069 to 6900 kPa will be
employed in converter 90, and the catalyst will generally
comprise a supported, chromium-promoted iron catalyst.
15 Thereafter, gas exiting the high temperature shift con-
verter is withdrawn via conduit 92 and is passed to a
second steam generator 94 in which saturated steam 98 is
produced from water feed 96 and is returned to drum 100
from which water 96 was received. The partially cooled
20 high temperature shift effluent from generator 94 (op-
tionally after further heat recovery, as for example in a
separate boiler feedwater preheat exchanger) is fed to
low temperature shift (LTS) converter 105, or preferably
first to guard bed 190.

25 Guard bed 190, which is optional, is preferably
employed to treat gas stream 99 upstream of low tempera-
ture shift converter 105 to remove halide and sulfur
impurities and thereby protect any halide- and sulfur-
sensitive catalyst in low temperature shift converter
30 105. The operation of guard bed 190 and the type of
catalyst used therein (e.g., zinc oxide promoted with
copper oxide), is conventional, and this step is gener-
ally conducted at temperatures and pressures within the
ranges used in low temperature shift converter 105 as
35 described below, and the solids employed in guard bed 190
for such halide- and S-impurities removal can comprise

1 the same catalyst as is used in low temperature shift
converter 105.

5 In shift converter 105, a low temperature shift
conversion reaction is effected over conventional cata-
lyst using conventional methods and equipment to form
additional quantities of H_2 and CO_2 . Generally, a tem-
perature of from about 204 to $260^{\circ}C$ and a pressure of
from about 2069 to 6900 kPa will be employed in converter
105, and the catalyst will generally comprise a mixture
10 of zinc and copper oxides. The effluent gas from low
temperature shift converter 105 is then cooled in heat
recovery zone 114 (which can comprise one or more heat
exchange vessels), and the cooled, low temperature shift
converter effluent gas 103, now depleted of its heat
15 values, is passed to CO_2 -removal zone 110, in which any
conventional process (e.g., solvent absorption of CO_2
gas) can be used to remove CO_2 via conduit 111. The
resulting, substantially CO_2 -free gas is fed by conduit
112 to conventional methanator zone 120 (which normally
20 includes one or more heat exchangers) for removal of addi-
tional CO and CO_2 and is then withdrawn (via conduit
124), compressed in compressor 130 and passed as direct
feed via conduit 126 to ammonia synthesis and recovery
zone 140, wherein NH_3 is formed from the H_2/N_2 synthesis
25 gas 126 (i.e., about 3:1 $H_2:N_2$ molar ratio) using conven-
tional techniques (i.e., over Fe-catalyst at 316 to
 $538^{\circ}C$). Waste gases are withdrawn via conduit 142 to
purge methane and argon impurities introduced into zone
140, and product NH_3 is recovered via conduit 144. Ex-
30 cess heat in the ammonia synthesis section is removed by
means of heat removal means 152 which can comprise heat
exchangers, boilers, and the like.

The operations of CO_2 removal zone 110, methanation
zone 120, compressor 130 and NH_3 synthesis zone 140 are
35 conventional and need not be more completely described
for a full understanding of the process of this inven-

tion. The precise operating parameters and equipment of each such process step, there ore, will be readily apparent to one having ordinary skill in the art, and each step can include the usual internal recycle streams and stages found useful in the prior art. Thus, CO₂-removal zone 110 can include conventional CO₂-absorption and CO₂ desorption stages wherein the CO₂-laden gas 103 is contacted with a liquid containing either a solvent for, or a dissolved compound (e.g., K₂CO₃) readily reactive with, the CO₂; the CO₂-free gases (generally containing less than about 0.3 vol.% CO₂) are withdrawn; and the solvent is treated to desorb the CO₂ gases 111 for recycle of solvent to the absorber. Zone 110 can also employ conventional pressure swing adsorption methods for CO₂ removal. Exemplary of suitable conventional CO₂ removal systems are those discussed in Kirk-Othmer, Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology, 3d ed., vol. 2, pp. 492-494 (1978). Similarly, methanator 120 will generally employ a temperature in the range of about 260 to 482⁰C, a pressure from about 2069 to 6900 kPa, and a supported Ni catalyst (e.g., Ni on alumina) to convert any remaining CO and CO₂ in gas stream 112 to methane, thereby producing an effluent gas 124 containing less than about 10 vppm (i.e., parts per million by volume) of total CO and CO₂, and H₂ and N₂ in a H₂:N₂ molar ratio of from about 2.6:1 to 3.2:1. Compression in zone 130 can take place in several stages, as desired, to bring the methanator effluent to synthesis reactor pressure, which generally ranges from about 10,340 to 34,470 kPa. (If desired, compressors 130 can be located upstream of zone 110, to compress the gas prior to treatment in zone 110.) Finally, ammonia synthesis zone 140 can include conventional dryer units wherein trace water is removed from the syn gas as required and conventional purge recovery units wherein a portion or all of the gas effluent from the ammonia synthesis reactor is treated to recover and

1 recycle H₂ to the reactor and to remove inerts such as
CH₄ and Ar therefrom. (If desired, such conventional
dryer units can instead be located prior to or at an
intermediate point within gas compression stage zone
5 130.)

The improved process of this invention produces a
syn gas 126, having a H₂:N₂ molar ratio of about 3:1,
that is a H₂:N₂ molar ratio of from about 2.6:1 to
3.2:1, and which has a residual methane concentration
10 (dry basis) of less than about 3 vol.%, and more typi-
cally less than about 2 vol.%, and which is therefore
particularly suitable for direct feed to an ammonia
synthesis reactor zone 140, that is a syn gas 126 which
is not subjected to a cryogenic purification following
15 methanator 120 to remove excess nitrogen and/or methane
prior to the ammonia synthesis reaction. If desired,
syn gas 126 can be subjected to a cryogenic purifica-
tion prior to introduction into ammonia synthesis reac-
tor zone 140, for example by use of the cryogenic puri-
20 fication method of U.S. Patent 3,442,613, the dis-
closure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

In Figure 3, there is illustrated a preferred
method for generating superheated steam by recovery of
waste heat from the secondary reformer effluent 62,
25 which is produced as illustrated in Figure 1. In the
embodiment of Figure 3, a secondary reformer effluent
62 is first passed to saturated steam generator 70 for
generation of saturated high pressure steam 74 from
preheated water stream 72. The partially cooled sec-
30 ondary reformer effluent 76 is withdrawn from boiler 70
and passed to first series steam superheater 89 for
generation of superheated steam 84 which is passed to
convection section superheater 25 as described above.
In this embodiment, the high pressure steam passed to
35 superheat exchanger 89 is steam 77, which is produced
from high pressure saturated steam 82 in second heat
exchanger 85 to form a further heated steam 81, which

1 is then combined with any by-pass steam flowing through
valve 75 to conduit 87 and passed via conduit 77 to the
first exchanger 89. The heating medium for second
exchanger 85 comprises the further cooled secondary
5 reformer effluent 79 which is withdrawn from first
superheat exchanger 89. There is thus formed the de-
sired secondary reformer effluent stream 86 which can
then be passed to shift conversion or boiler as des-
cribed above. In the embodiment of Figure 3, the
10 position of valve 75 in by-pass conduit 87 is con-
trolled to achieve the desired temperature " T_1 " in
superheated steam 36 leaving superheater 25, which is
positioned in convection section 4, as described above.
A second by-pass conduit, conduit 62b around steam
15 generator 70, is provided having a control valve 62a,
the position of which is controlled to achieve the
desired temperature " T_1 " in the cooled secondary
effluent stream 86 leaving steam superheat exchanger
85. Such feedback control valves 75 and 62a permit
20 lower metal temperatures in exchanger 89 and thereby
allow use of lower cost metallurgy and/or provide
longer exchanger service life. Therefore, in Figure 3,
the first steam superheating zone comprises a series of
two superheaters 89 and 85.

25 The preferred split of superheat duty between
secondary reformer effluent superheat exchanger(s) 80
and the convection section superheater 25 depends on the
overall plant steam and heat balance.

Preferably, the amount of steam superheating
30 done in the secondary reformer effluent superheat ex-
changer(s) 80 should be just enough to eliminate the
need for auxiliary firing in the reformer furnace con-
vection section (i.e., set so that total superheating
duty can be supplied without auxiliary firing) yet not
35 so great as to require installation of a convection
section boiler to fully recover available convection
section waste heat.

1 Referring to Figure 4, the embodiment of Figure 3
is illustrated wherein the position of valve 75 in by-
pass conduit 87 is controlled to achieve the desired
temperature " T_3 " in gas stream 86, which comprises the
5 feedstream to high temperature shift zone 90. The
sensed temperature " T_2 " of superheated steam 36 leaving
convection section superheater 25 is employed to con-
trol the position of valve 62a in by-pass line 62b
which is provided about steam generator 70 to control
10 the amount of secondary reformer effluent 62 which is
passed to generator 70.

Referring now to Figure 5, secondary reformer
effluent 62 is passed to saturated steam generator 70
for generation of saturated high pressure steam 74 from
15 preheated water stream 72. The partially cooled second-
ary reformer effluent 76 is withdrawn from boiler 70
and passed to steam superheater 80 for generation of
superheated steam 84 which is passed to convection
section superheater 25 as described above. A by-pass
20 line 87 is provided about exchanger 80 and is provided
with valve 75, whose position is controlled to achieve
the desired temperature " T_4 " of superheated steam 36,
in order to control the amount of saturated high pres-
sure steam 82 which is passed to superheater 80.
25 (Superheater 80 can of course be optionally further
split into two exchangers in series with steam by-pass
and control means arranged as illustrated in Figure
3). There is thus formed a partially cooled secondary
reformer effluent stream 180 which can then be passed
30 to a second saturated steam generator 170 for genera-
tion of additional saturated high pressure steam 174
from preheated water stream 172, and to form a further
cooled secondary reformer effluent stream 86 which can
be passed to shift conversion zone 90 as described
35 above. By-pass line 176, which is provided with valve
175, is preferably provided about the second boiler 170
to control the amount of secondary reformer effluent

1 which is passed to boiler 170. Preferably, valve 175
is controlled to achieve the desired temperature "T₅"
which is sensed in stream 86.

5 The improved process of this invention can be
further illustrated by reference to the following exam-
ples.

EXAMPLE 1

To compare the improvements achieved by the proc-
ess of this invention, the following cases have been
10 studied, referring to the simplified ammonia plant high
pressure steam and heat system schematic illustrated in
Figure 2. The terms employed in Figure 2 are defined
as set forth in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1

15	<u>Definition of Terms in Figure 2</u>	
	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
	QAUx	Primary reformer furnace con- vection section auxiliary burner firing rate.
20	QBOILF	Primary reformer convection section boiler heat duty.
	QBOIL2	Secondary reformer effluent waste heat boiler 70 heat duty.
	QCONV	Total reformer furnace convec- tion section 4 heat duty.
25	QECO	Primary reformer furnace con- vection section economizer (BFW ⁽¹⁾ preheater 22) heat duty.
30	QMAIN	Primary reformer furnace radi- ant section burner (14 + 16 combustion) firing rate.
	QMISC	Miscellaneous waste heat avail- able (from HTS, LTS and ammonia synthesis reactor effluents) for steam generation and BFW ⁽¹⁾ preheat.
35		

1	QPRO	Primary reformer furnace con- vection section process preheat duty(2).
	QRAD	Primary reformer radiant heat
5		absorbed by catalyst tubes 56.
	QSEC	Total waste heat available between secondary reformer outlet 62 and high temperature shift converter 80 inlet 86.
10	QSHTF	Primary reformer furnace con- vection section superheater 25 heat duty.
	QSHT2	Secondary reformer effluent superheater 80 heat duty.
15	S1500	Total 10,340 kPa/482°C super- heated steam production (con- duit 36).

Notes: (1) Boiler feedwater.

(2) Sum of feed gas exchanger 24, process steam
20 exchanger 21 and process air exchanger 26 heat duties.

(Also, in Figure 2, the term "blowdown" is in-
tended to refer to the small amount of water conven-
tionally purged from boilers to avoid excessive build-
up of trace non-volatile impurities entering the
25 boiler with the feed water. Auxiliary firing refers to
conventional auxiliary burners employed in the con-
vection section of the primary reforming furnace.)

In Case A, the process of this invention is il-
lustrated employing the embodiment of Figure 1 and
30 using series steam superheaters 80 and 25 as described
above to form an ammonia synthesis gas. In Case B, the
embodiment of Figure 1 is modified and all steam super-
heating is performed in the primary reformer furnace's
convection section, and effluent waste heat is used
35 only for generation of saturated steam (i.e., no steam

1 superheater 80 is used). In Case C, Figure 1 is modified such that all steam superheating is performed
using secondary reformer effluent waste heat, and no
convection section superheater 25 is used. In Case D,
5 a conventional convection section boiler is provided in
the primary reformer of Case C.

Referring to Table 2, the series superheaters
arrangement of Case A can be compared with the most
conventional approach in Case B of doing all super-
10 heating in the reformer furnace convection section, and
using secondary reformer effluent waste heat only for
saturated steam production. The series superheaters
Case A adjusts the heat duty split between the two
superheaters to yield a total reformer furnace convec-
15 tion section duty ($Q_{CONV} = 185.8 \text{ GJ/hr}$) that uses all
the heat available (for these Examples, down to a target
stack temperature of 160°C) in the flue gas leaving
the reformer radiant section, but does not require any
auxiliary fuel firing in the convection section. The
20 conventional Case B (same radiant section reformer
firing and heat duty as Case A) does not have the flex-
ibility of the series superheater approach, and pro-
duces a great deal of extra steam in the secondary
reformer effluent waste heat boiler (Q_{BOIL2} rises to
25 190.5 GJ/hr in Case B from 105.2 GJ/hr in Case A).
This requires more boiler feedwater which raises the
convection section boiler feedwater preheat duty (Q_{ECO}
is 112.3 GJ/hr vs. 70.6 GJ/hr). The increased
steam production also boosts the total superheating
30 duty substantially (Q_{SHTF} plus Q_{SHT2} is 129.4 GJ/hr
vs. 97.1 GJ/hr in Case A). Combining these effects,
one sees a steam production (S_{1500}) increase in Case B
of 52808 kgm/hr , at the expense of a convection heat
duty jump of 159.4 GJ/hr . Assuming a 90% efficiency
35 of the primary reformer furnace, this requires auxil-
iary fuel firing (Q_{AUX}) of $177.1 \text{ GJ (LHV)/hr}$, which

1 corresponds to 4.2 GJ (LHV)/MeT NH₃. Unless a highly
efficient use could be found for the incremental steam
production, a huge energy penalty would be incurred.

5 Cases C and D illustrate the opposite situation
to Case B, with all superheating being done with sec-
ondary reformer effluent waste heat (no convection
section superheater). In Case C, there is no steam
generation in the primary reformer furnace convection
section. Case D adds a conventional boiler to Case C
10 for steam generation in the convection section.

In Case C, without a convection section boiler,
total steam production goes down to 153,074 kgm/hr,
because more of the secondary reformer effluent waste
heat must go for superheating, and correspondingly less
15 is available for steam generation. Economizer duty
also falls in Case C, because less boiler feedwater
must be preheated. Overall, the total convection sec-
tion duty drops (no superheating and smaller economizer
duty) to 170 GJ/hr. Since the "natural" heat
20 available in the convection section flue gas without
auxiliary firing (i.e., the heat available from cooling
the flue gas to the 160°C target stack temperature) is
185.9 GJ /hr, 15.9 GJ/hr is wasted up the stack. If
this must be made up in a 90% efficient offsite boiler,
25 the extra firing requirement would be 17.7
GJ (LHV)/hr, which corresponds to 0.4 GJ (LHV)/MeT
NH₃.

If a convection section boiler is provided as in
Case D, the secondary reformer effluent steam genera-
30 tion lost when doing all the superheating with second-
ary reformer effluent can be made up in the reformer
furnace convection section. One can then end up with
an identical overall energy balance to the series
superheaters Case A. As can be seen from Table 2,
35 total convection section duties (QCONV) and total steam
generations (Sl500) are the same. In this situation,
the advantage for the series superheaters concept lies
not in energy credits or increased steam production

1 flexibility, but rather in simplifying the process
arrangement. With a convection section boiler, a
5 forced boiler water circulation system is normally re-
quired. This adds the investment, operating cost and
reliability debits of having boiler-water circulating
pumps. Conversely, without a convection section
boiler, as in the series superheaters concept, a
simpler natural boiler water circulation system nor-
mally can be used, eliminating the need for boiler-
10 water circulating pumps.

Overall, the use of series superheaters 80 and 25
according to the process of this invention offers sub-
stantial advantages over conventional ammonia plant
arrangements, especially for low energy designs with
15 limited steam export potential, and particularly for
designs employing low severity reforming, wherein the
secondary reformer effluent possesses greater than
about 0.8 vol.% methane (dry basis).

Table 2
Energy Effects of Superheating Alternatives (1)

Item	Units	Case A Series Superheaters	Case B		Case C		Case D	
			Only 1 st Reformer Superheater (2)	No 1 st Reformer	Only Secondary Reformer 1 st Reformer Boiler	1 st Reformer Boiler	Superheater With	1 st Reformer Boiler
QNTSC	Gj/hr	205.3	205.3		205.3			205.3
QPRO	Gj/hr	103.6	103.6		103.6			103.6
QSEC	Gj/hr	190.5	190.5		190.5			190.5
QBOILF	Gj/hr	-	-		-			11.7
QNOIL2	Gj/hr	105.2	190.5		96.7			93.5
QECO	Gj/hr	70.6	112.3		66.4			70.6
QSHTF	Gj/hr	11.7	129.4		-			-
QSHY2	Gj/hr	85.3	-		93.8			97.1
QCONV	Gj/hr	185.9	345.3		170.0			185.9
QAUX (4)	Gj (LIV)/hr	-	177.1		-			-
S1500	Kg/hr	158,307	211,114		153,074			158,307

Notes: (1) Reformer radiant firing (QMAIN) and heat absorbed (QRAD) equal for all cases. Basis is steam balance for a 1000 Net/SD (metric ton per on-stream day) ammonia plant.

(2) Assumes no shield boiler is required to protect convection section from auxiliary burner radiation (otherwise QBOILF is not zero and QAUX and S1500 rise even further). Also assumes economizer duty must rise (maintaining same boiler feedwater preheat temperature) to avoid heat transfer pinch in convection section.

(3) If lost convection section waste heat recovery must be made up via a 90% efficient boiler, the extra fuel requirement would be 17.7 Gj (LIV)/hr, equivalent to 0.42 Gj (LIV)/MeTNI₃. (Gj = joules x 10⁹)

LIV = lower heating value.)

(4) Assumes 90% convection section heat recovery from auxiliary firing (1st reformer).

(5) Equivalent to 4.3 Gj (LIV)/MeT NI₃.

1

EXAMPLE 2

To provide further evidence of the process improvements achieved by this invention, the following additional cases have been studied, again referring to the simplified ammonia plant high pressure steam and heat systems schematic illustrated in Figure 2 and employing the identified terms of Table 1 above.

Case A represents the process of this invention as described in Example 1. In Case A, no superheating of steam is accomplished in heat recovery zone 152 in ammonia synthesis converter zone 140. In Case E, the process of Figure 1 is modified by superheating steam in converter synthesis zone 140, e.g., in a steam superheating exchanger 152 in indirect heat exchange with the ammonia reactor effluent gas, and then further superheating in a second superheater 25 provided in the convection section of the primary reformer as in Figure 1. ("QSHTC" in Table 3 refers to the heat duty in the superheater provided in ammonia synthesis converter zone 140 to recover heat from the effluent of the ammonia synthesis reactor.) Therefore, in Case E, superheated steam is not produced by recovery of heat from the secondary reformer effluent. The process of Figure 1 is modified in Case F in that the convection section of the primary reformer is not provided with either a superheater exchanger or a boiler in order to generate steam, and all steam superheating is accomplished by means of a superheater 152 positioned at the effluent of the ammonia synthesis reactor and a second superheater 80 in the secondary reformer effluent. Case G represents the modification to Case F, wherein a boiler is also provided in the primary reformer convection section. Finally, in Case H, the process of Case F is modified by the addition of a superheater 25 in the primary reformer convection section.

Referring to Table 3, the series superheaters arrangement of Case A can be compared with Case E,

1 which employs a superheater in ammonia synthesis con-
verter zone 140 and a superheater in the primary re-
former convection section, but not a secondary reformer
5 effluent superheater. For Case E to yield an equiva-
lent steam and energy balance to Case A, the ammonia
synthesis converter zone superheater duty, QSHTC,
should be able to fully substitute for the secondary
reformer effluent superheater duty, QSHT2, in Case A.
10 However, the temperature of the ammonia synthesis reac-
tor effluent is much lower than that of secondary re-
former effluent, even after secondary reformer effluent
has been partially cooled in a boiler as in Case A.
Accordingly, it may not be possible to achieve a suf-
15 ficiently high superheated steam temperature in an
ammonia reactor effluent superheater to provide the
desired heat duty. In the example illustrated by Case
E, the ammonia synthesis converter effluent temperature
is 444°C , and the maximum steam superheat temperature
20 achievable in a heat exchanger using converter effluent
as a heat source was assumed to be 417°C , in order to
provide a 10°C driving force for heat transfer. With
a steam outlet temperature limited to 417°C , the am-
monia reactor effluent superheater duty (QSHTC) was
25 limited to 71.5 GJ/hr, as compared to 85.3 GJ/hr
for QSHT2 in Case A. This leaves Case E with a shortage
of steam superheating capability and a surplus of steam
generating capability. To bring Case E back into bal-
ance, it is therefore necessary to provide auxiliary
30 firing in the reformer furnace convection section to
supply additional superheating duty. The net effect is
that total steam generation (S1500) goes up from
158,307 Kgm in Case A to 166,923 Kgm in Case E, at the expense
of 28.9 GJ/hr of auxiliary firing (QAUX) in Case E
35 (assuming 90 percent primary reformer furnace effi-
ciency), which corresponds to $0.7 \text{ GJ (LHV) / MeT NH}_3$.
Unless a highly efficient use could be found for the

1 incremental steam production, a large energy penalty
would thus be incurred. Moreover, the ammonia synthe-
sis reactor effluent superheater employed in Case E
must of necessity utilize an expensive high pressure
5 shell mechanical design because both fluids are at a
high pressure, so that no matter which one is passed
through the shell side of the heat exchanger, the shell
sees a high pressure.

Cases F-H illustrate the effect of using a sec-
10 ondary reformer effluent superheater plus an ammonia
synthesis converter effluent superheater. Case F does
not however include a primary reformer convection sec-
tion boiler or superheater. Its overall energy and
steam balance is equivalent to that of Case C, because
15 without either a boiler or a superheater in the re-
former convection section, the total convection section
heat available (down to 160°C stack temperature) cannot
be utilized. If the lost convection section heat re-
covery must be made up in a 90 percent efficient off-
20 site boiler, the extra firing requirement would be 17.7
Gj (LHV)/hr, which corresponds to 0.4 Gj (LHV)/MeT
 NH_3 . Moreover, as with Case E, the ammonia synthesis
reactor effluent superheater employed must in necessity
utilize an expensive high pressure shell mechanical
25 design because both fluids are at high pressure and
therefore the shell side will be exposed to a high
pressure no matter which fluid is passed through the
shell side of the heat exchanger. Note that the same
overall Case F heat and steam balance can be produced
30 over a fairly broad range of values for QMISC, QBOIL2,
QSHT2 and QSHTC. Notes (9), (10), (11) and (14) define
the allowable ranges for the variables. If, for exam-
ple, QSHTC were set to zero, Case F would reduce to
Case C. If, at the other extreme, QSHTC was set to its
35 maximum value of 65.6 Gj/hr (10°C driving force in
converter effluent superheater), QMISC would be 139.7

1 GJ /hr per Note (9), QSHT2 would be 28.1 GJ/hr per
Note (11), and QBOIL2 would be 162.4 GJ /hr per Note
(10). Obviously, any intermediate value of QSHTC could
5 also be used, with corresponding QMISC, QSHT2 and
QBOIL2 values calculated. Since the overall steam and
energy balance would be unchanged, the optimum value of
QSHTC could be selected so as to minimize investment
requirements using conventional means for determining
that optimum point.

10 Case G utilizes an ammonia synthesis reactor
effluent superheater, a secondary reformer effluent
superheater and a primary reformer convection section
boiler. It yields the same overall heat and steam
balance as does the series superheaters Case A, and is
15 actually quite analogous to Case D. The advantage of
Case A vs. Case G is therefore not in terms of energy
credits or increased steam production flexibility, but
rather in simplifying the process arrangement. Cases A
and G each employ two power steam superheaters, but
20 Case G additionally employs a primary reformer convec-
tion section boiler. In addition to that representing
an extra piece of heat exchange equipment, a convection
section boiler normally requires a forced boiler water
circulation system, which adds the investment, operat-
25 ing costs and reliability debits of having boiler water
circulating pumps. Conversely, without a convection
section boiler, a simpler natural boiler water circula-
tion system normally can be used. Another disadvantage
of Case G is that, as with Cases E and F, the ammonia
30 synthesis reactor effluent superheater employed must of
necessity utilize an expensive high pressure shell
mechanical design because both fluids are at high pres-
sure, so that no matter which one is passed through the
shell side of the heat exchanger, the shell sees a high
35 pressure. The overall energy and steam balance illus-
trated for Case G can be achieved while using a range

1 of heat duties for QMISC, QBOIL2, QSHT2 and QSHTC, as
described in Table 3 Notes (9), (10), (12) and (15).
If QSHTC is set at zero (i.e., eliminating ammonia
5 synthesis reactor effluent superheater), Case G reduces
to Case D. At the other extreme, if QSHTC is set at a
maximum value of 67.8 GJ/hr (10°C driving force in
converter effluent superheater), QMISC is then 137.5
GJ/hr per Note (9), QSHT2 is 29.2 GJ/hr per Note
10 (12) and QBOIL2 is 161.3 GJ/hr per Note (10). Re-
gardless of the QSHTC duty chosen, QBOILF is 11.7
GJ/hr and QECO is 70.6 GJ/hr, the same values as in
Case D. As with Case F, the specific value of QSHTC
chosen can be set by a conventional optimization of
investment cost.

15 Case H employs an ammonia synthesis reactor ef-
fluent superheater, a secondary reformer effluent
superheater and a primary reformer convection section
superheater, but no convection section boiler. It
yields the same overall energy and steam balance as
20 does the Case A series superheater arrangement. There-
fore, the advantage of a series superheaters concept
over the Case H arrangement lies not in energy credits
or increased steam production flexibility but rather in
simplifying the process arrangement. Case A requires
25 one less superheater than Case H. Moreover, the am-
monia synthesis reactor effluent superheater employed
in Case H must of necessity utilize an expensive high
pressure shell mechanical design because both fluids
are at high pressure, so that no matter which one is
30 passed through the shell side of the heat exchanger,
the shell sees a high pressure. Case H gives the iden-
tical overall energy and steam balance over a range of
heat duties for QMISC, QBOIL2, QSHT2 and QSHTC, as
limited by the relationships described in Notes (9),
35 (10), (13) and (15). If QSHTC is set at zero, Case H
reduces to the Case A series superheaters arrangement

1 (i.e., ammonia synthesis reactor effluent superheater
is eliminated). At the other extreme, if QSHTC is set
at its maximum value of 67.8 Gj/hr (to provide the
minimum 10°C heat transfer driving force), QMISC would
5 be 137.5 Gj /hr per Note (9), QSET2 would be 17.5
Gj/hr per Note (13) and QBOIL2 would be 173.0 Gj/hr
per Note (10). Any intermediate value of QSHTC is
feasible, with the optimum value determinable by con-
ventional means in order to minimize investment.

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Table 3
Energy Effects of Superheating Alternatives (6)

Item	Units	Case A			Case F		Case G		Case H	
		Series	Superheaters	No Secondary Reformer Effluent Reformer Boiler or Superheater	No Primary Reformer Boiler	With Primary Reformer Boiler	With Primary Reformer Boiler	With Primary Reformer Superheater	With Primary Reformer Superheater	With Primary Reformer Superheater
Q _{HTSC}	Gj/hr	205.3		133.8	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)	(9)
Q _{HTO}	Gj/hr	103.6		103.6	103.6	103.6	103.6	103.6	103.6	103.6
Q _{SEC}	Gj/hr	190.5		190.5	190.5	190.5	190.5	190.5	190.5	190.5
Q _{HTIF}	Gj/hr	-		-	-	-	11.7	-	-	-
Q _{HTI.2}	Gj/hr	105.2		190.5	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)
Q _{ECO}	Gj/hr	70.6		77.3	66.4	66.4	70.6	70.6	70.6	70.6
Q _{HTF}	Gj/hr	11.7		30.9	-	-	-	11.7	11.7	11.7
Q _{HT2}	Gj/hr	85.3		-	(10)(11)	(10)(11)	(10)(12)	(10)(13)	(10)(13)	(10)(13)
Q _{CONV}	Gj/hr	185.9		211.8 (7)	170 (3)	170 (3)	185.9	185.9	185.9	185.9
Q _{AUX}	Gj/hr	-		28.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
S ₁₅₀₀	kg/hr	158,307		166,923 (8)	153,074	153,074	158,307	158,307	158,307	158,307
Q _{HTC}	Gj/hr	-		71.5	(9)(11)(14)	(9)(11)(14)	(9)(12)(15)	(9)(13)(15)	(9)(13)(15)	(9)(13)(15)

Notes:

- (3) If lost convection section waste heat recovery must be made up via a 90% efficient boiler, the extra fuel requirement would be 177.0 Gj(LIIV)/hr, equivalent to 0.42 Gj (LIIV)/Net NH₃. (Gj = joules x 10⁹; LIIV = lower heating value.)
- (6) Cases F-II employ a steam superheat exchanger to recover heat from the ammonia reactor effluent. Cases F-II also employ a secondary reformer effluent superheater.
- (7) Equivalent to 0.7 Gj (LIIV)/Net NH₃.
- (8) Heat transfer limited by need to provide 10°C hot end temperature driving force in converter effluent superheater (444°C converter outlet and 417°C superheater outlet).
- (9) Q_{HTSC} + Q_{HTC} = 205.3
- (10) Q_{HTI.2} + Q_{HT2} = 190.5
- (11) Q_{HT2} + Q_{HTC} = 93.8
- (12) Q_{HT2} + Q_{HTC} = 97.1
- (13) Q_{HT2} + Q_{HTC} = 85.3
- (14) Q_{HTC} cannot exceed 65.6 if a minimum 10°C driving force is desired in the converter effluent superheater.
- (15) Q_{HTC} cannot exceed 67.8 if a minimum 10°C driving force is desired in the converter effluent superheater.

1 While the process of this invention has been
described above in relation to production of ammonia
synthesis gas, containing mixtures of hydrogen and
nitrogen suitable for feed to an ammonia synthesis
5 reactor for formation of ammonia, it will also be
understood that the process of this invention is also
suitable for formation of hydrogen-enriched gases, and
that the foregoing description can be modified by sub-
stituting a nitrogen-depleted or nitrogen-free oxygen-
10 containing gas for the process air 32. Thus, oxygen-
enriched gas can be passed via conduit 32 to exchanger
26 for preheating for introduction into secondary re-
former 60 by means of conduit 34, to provide the oxygen
requirements for the secondary reforming reaction and
15 to produce a secondary reformer effluent 62 which is
enriched in hydrogen and which can then be treated as
described above for generation of superheated steam and
subjected to the conventional steps of high temperature
shift and low temperature shift conversion, carbon
20 oxide removal and drying or other conventional purifi-
cation steps, such as pressure swing adsorption, to
form the desired hydrogen-enriched gas, which will
generally contain hydrogen in an amount of from about
60 to 100 vol.% on a dry basis. Any of the above-
25 discussed feed gas streams 6 which are reformable can
be used as a feed, and the process conditions described
above are equally suitable.

 Thus, while I have illustrated and described the
preferred embodiment of my invention, and have des-
30 cribed my invention and the manner and process of mak-
ing and using it in such full, clear, concise and exact
terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to
which it pertains to make and use the same, one skilled
in the art can easily ascertain the essential char-
35 acteristics of this invention and without department
from the spirit and scope thereof can make various

- 1 changes and/or modifications to the invention for
adapting it to various usages and conditions. Accord-
ingly, such changes and/or modifications are properly
intended to be within the full range of equivalents of
5 the following claims.

All pressures referred to herein are in units
of kilopascals, gauge, and heat units are giga joules
(1×10^9).

CLAIMS:

1. In a process for steam reforming of a hydrocarbon gas feedstream wherein:
(a) the hydrocarbon gas feedstream is partially reformed at elevated temperatures in indirect heat exchange with hot combustion gases in a direct fired primary reforming furnace provided with a convection section for recovery of excess heat from said combustion gases; and (b) the partially reformed feedstream is then further reformed in the presence of an oxygen-containing gas and steam in a secondary reformer to form a secondary reformer gaseous effluent; the improvement which comprises recovering waste heat from said secondary reformer effluent gas and from said primary reforming combustion products by (i) heating a high pressure saturated steam in a first steam superheating zone by indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said secondary reformer effluent gas to form a first superheated steam stream; and (ii) further heating said first superheated steam in a second steam superheating zone by indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said primary reformer hot combustion gases to form a second superheated steam stream.

2. The improved process of claim 1 wherein said first stream of superheated steam withdrawn from said first superheating zone is characterized by a temperature of from about 260 to 510°C.

3. The improved process of claim 1 wherein the superheated steam formed in said second superheating zone is characterized by a temperature of about 316 to 566°C.

4. The improved process of claim 1 wherein said secondary reformer gaseous effluent is first passed to a steam boiler for generation of high pressure saturated steam, thereby forming a partially cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent and wherein said partially cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent is passed to said first superheating zone for generation of said first stream of superheated steam.

5. The improved process of claim 4 wherein said partially cooled secondary gaseous effluent is characterized by a temperature of from about 454. to 816°C.

6. The improved process according to claim 4 wherein at least a portion of the high pressure saturated steam passed to said first superheating zone is generated in a second steam boiler by indirect heat exchange with the secondary reformer gaseous effluent which is withdrawn from said first superheating zone.

7. The improved process of claim 1 wherein said secondary reformer effluent gas is treated to recover waste heat therefrom by (i) passing said secondary reformer gaseous effluent to a steam boiler for generation of high pressure saturated steam, to form a partially cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent; (ii) passing said partially cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent to a first steam superheat exchanger for generation of said first stream of superheated steam to form a further cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent; and (iii) passing said further cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent to a second steam superheater exchanger for still further cooling of said reformer effluent, said second steam superheat exchanger receiving high pressure saturated steam and forming superheated steam therein for feed of said superheated

steam to first steam superheater exchanger, said second steam superheat exchanger being provided with by-pass control means for controlling the quantity of said high pressure saturated steam which is passed through said second superheat exchanger.

8. The improved process according to claim 7 wherein said by-pass control means are controlled in response to the temperature of said second superheated steam stream.

9. The improved process according to claim 7 wherein said by-pass control means are controlled in response to the temperature of said still further cooled secondary reformer effluent gas which is withdrawn from said second steam superheat exchanger.

10. The improved process according to claim 1 wherein said second superheated steam stream is passed to steam turbines for recovery of work therefrom and wherein at least a portion of the steam discharged from said turbines is passed to step (a) of the process for said partial reforming of the hydrocarbon gas feedstream.

11. The improved process of claim 10 wherein at least a portion of steam discharged from said turbines is further heated in said convection section prior to being passed to said step (a) for use in partial reforming of the hydrocarbon gas feedstream.

12. In a process for forming an ammonia synthesis gas by steam reforming of a hydrocarbon gas feedstream wherein: (a) the hydrocarbon gas feedstream is partially reformed at elevated temperatures in indirect heat exchange with hot combustion gases in a direct fired primary reforming furnace provided with a convection section for recovery of excess heat from said

combustion gases; (b) the partially reformed feedstream is then further reformed in the presence of air and steam in a secondary reformer to form a secondary reformer gaseous effluent; and (c) said secondary reformer gaseous effluent is subjected to shift conversion, carbon oxides removal and methanation to form an ammonia synthesis gas, the improvement which comprises recovering waste heat from said secondary reformer effluent gas and from said primary reforming combustion products by (i) heating a high pressure saturated steam in a first steam superheating zone by indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said secondary reformer effluent gas to form a first superheated steam stream; and (ii) further heating said first superheated steam in a second steam superheating zone by indirect heat exchange with at least a portion of said primary reformer hot combustion gases to form a second superheated steam stream.

13. The improved process of claim 12 wherein said secondary reformer gaseous effluent is first passed to a steam boiler for generation of high pressure saturated steam, thereby forming a partially cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent and wherein said partially cooled secondary reformer gaseous effluent is passed to said first superheating zone for generation of said first stream of superheated steam.

14. The improved process according to claim 12 wherein at least a portion of the high pressure saturated steam passed to said first superheating zone is generated in a second steam boiler by indirect heat exchange with the secondary reformer gaseous effluent which is withdrawn from said first superheating zone.



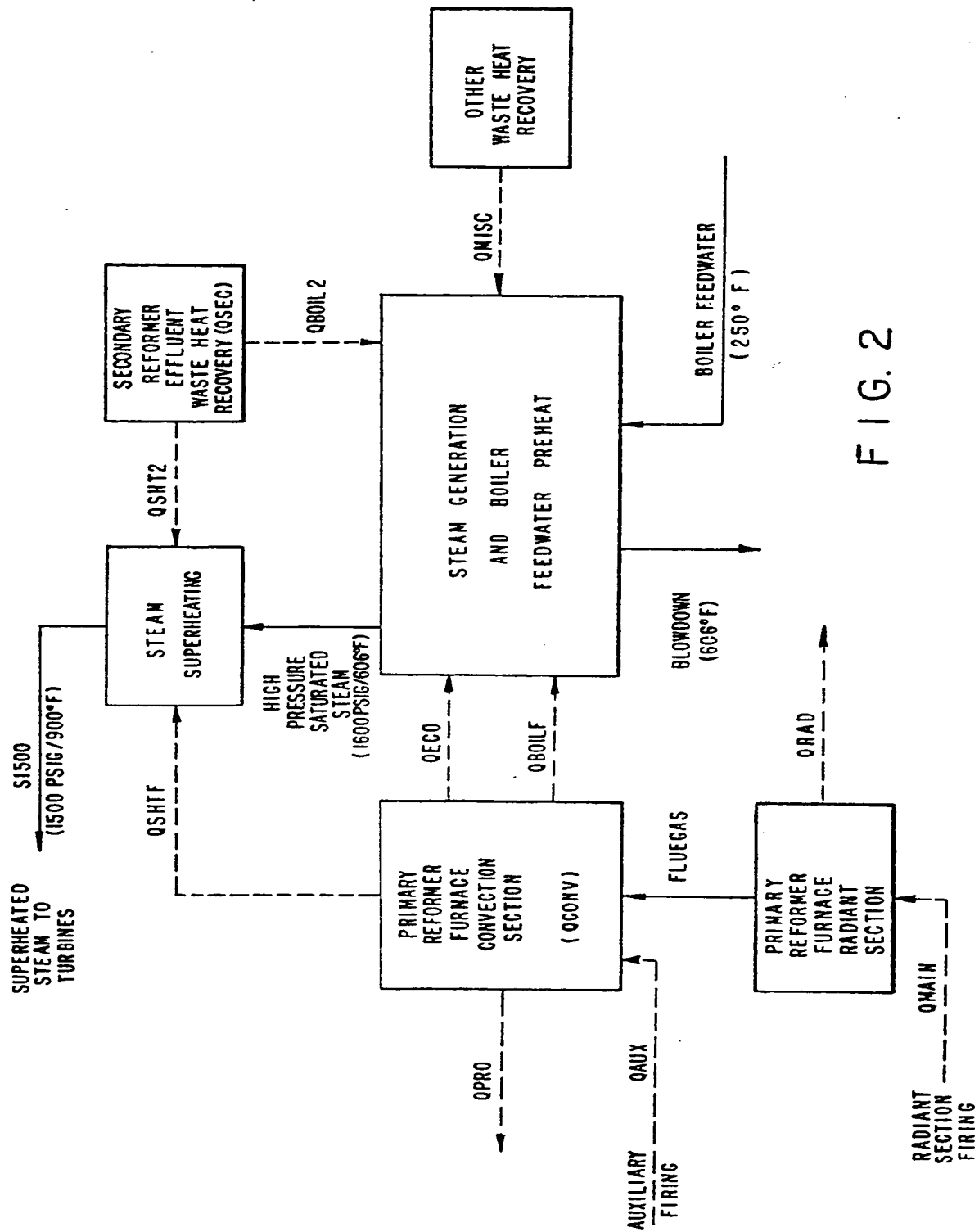


FIG. 2

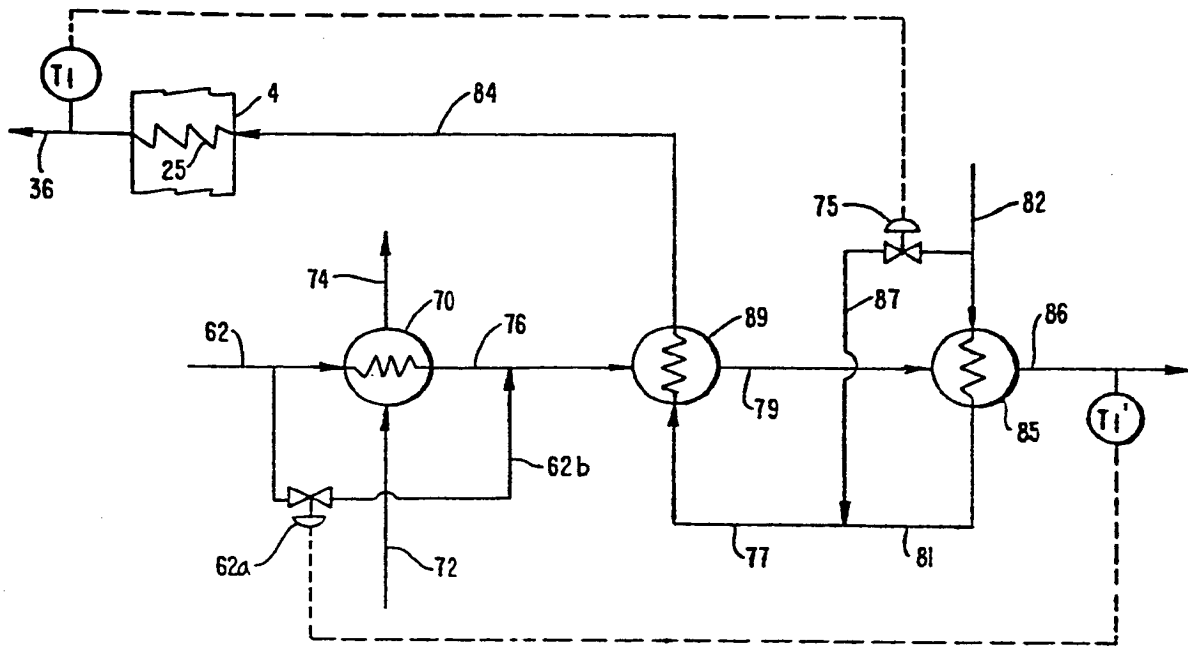


FIG. 3

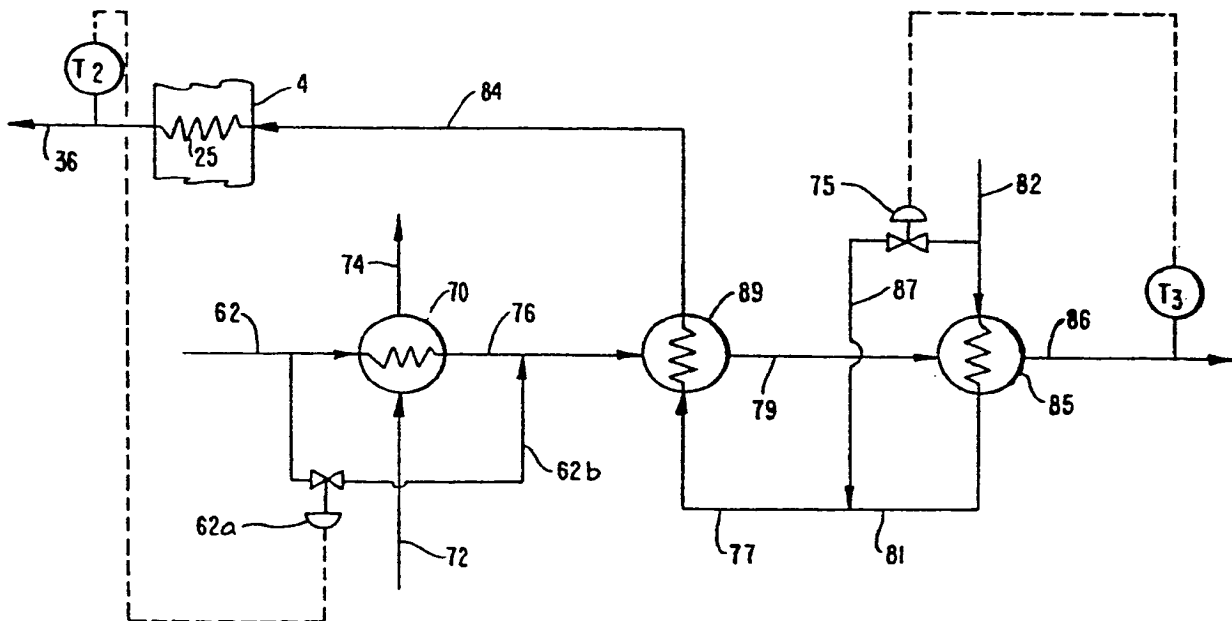


FIG. 4

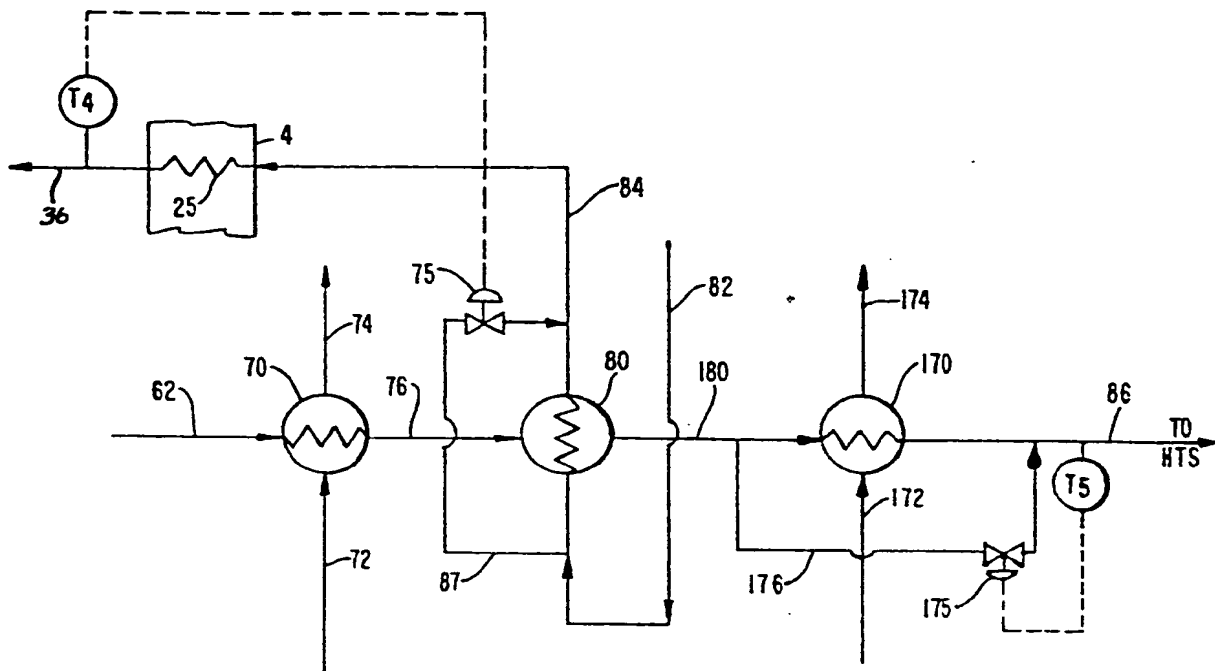


FIG. 5



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

0145211

Application number

EP 84 30 7416

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 4)
X	FR-A-2 430 390 (I.C.I.) * Figure; page 13, line 17 - page 14, line 30; page 15, lines 16-21 * & US - A - 4 264 567 (Cat. D) -----	1, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12-14	C 01 B 3/38
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 4)
			C 01 B 3/00
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12-02-1985	Examiner VAN BELLINGEN I.
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